

Message Text

SECRET

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46

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-11 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 DODE-00 DPW-01

PRS-01 DRC-01 /069 W

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R 200930Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

S E C R E T SAIGON 12251

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MORG, MPOL, VN, VS

SUBJ: NEW COLONEL GENERAL, HOANG VAN THAI, NOTED IN HANOI

REF: A) FBIS BANGKOK 160808 SEP 74; B) SAIGON 11467

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. VNA REPORTED (REF A) ON SEPT 16 THAT DEFENSE MINISTER VO NGUYEN GIAP HAD RECEIVED VISITING PRC ATHLETES ON SEPT 15. VNA DESPATCH WENT ON TO NOTE THAT "WITH GENERAL GIAP (WAS) COLONEL GENERAL HOANG VAN THAI, VICE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE".

2. THIS PUBLIC REFERENCE TO THAI'S ACTIVITIES IS THE FIRST IN EIGHT YEARS, THE LAST SEVEN OF WHICH HE SPENT COMMANDING COMMUNIST MILITARY FORCES OPERATING UNDER THE CENTRAL OFFICE FOR SOUTH VIET-NAM (COSVN), AND INDICATES THAT THAI WAS ONE OF THE GENERALS PROMOTED LAST SPRING. COLONEL GENERAL IS THE SECOND HIGHEST RANK IN THE VPA AND IS KNOWN TO BE HELD BY ONLY THREE MEN; SONG HAO, THE VPA'S POLITICAL COMMISSAR; CHU VAN TAN; AND NOW THAI. ONLY SENIOR GENERALS GIAP AND VAN TIEN DUNG,

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VPA CHIEF OF STAFF, RANK HIGHER IN THE MILITARY STRUCTURE.

CURIOUSLY, VNA DID NOT NOTE THAT THAI IS ALSO A FULL MEMBER OF THE
VWP CENTRAL COMMITTEE.

BEGIN SECRET/NOFORN

3. DEFECTOR AND PRISONER REPORTS RECEIVED IN THE PAST MONTH
OR SO (REF B) INDICATE THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE HAVE SET UP
TWO NEW MILITARY COMMANDS IN THE SOUTHERN NORTH VIETNAMESE
PANHANDLE AND THE TWO NORTHERNMOST PROVINCES OF SOUTH VIET-NAM.
THESE SAME SOURCES REPORTED THAT THAI HAD BEEN PROMOTED IN APRIL
AND, CON-CURRENTLY, HAD BEEN GIVEN COMMAND OVER ONE OF THE NEW
HEADQUARTERS. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION REGARDING THAI'S REPLACEMENT
AT COSVN.
LEHMANN

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NNN

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